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SUBJECT: COUNTER-TERRORISM: EU AGREES STRATEGY FOR
COMBATING RADICALIZATION AND RECRUITMENT

SUMMARY

1. EU Justice and Home Affairs Ministers (JHA Council) on December 1 agreed on a "EU Strategy for Combating Radicalization and Recruitment to Terrorism," including by disrupting the activities of networks and "ensuring that voices of mainstream opinion prevail over those of extremism." The ministers also concurred on a broader new EU Counter-Terrorism Strategy to be endorsed by EU leaders at their December 15-16 meeting. The ministers also approved the outlines of a Framework Decision for improving information exchange between law enforcement authorities, in particular as regards serious offences including terrorist acts. Further December 2 discussions of specific issues, including draft legislation on the retention of telecom data, will be reported SEPTEL. Full texts of Council conclusions and main CT-related documents mentioned in this report have been transmitted to EUR/ERA.
END SUMMARY.

EU COUNTER-TERRORISM STRATEGY

2. Ministers for Justice and Home Affairs on December 1 concurred on a new EU Counter-Terrorism Strategy to be formally endorsed by their leaders at their December 15-16 European Council meeting. The new strategy was designed:

- To provide a "clear and coherent framework" for the EU's CT work, and to lay out objectives for action, and
- To make Europe's work on Counter-Terrorism more understandable to the average citizen. The strategy will be presented in a series of PowerPoint slides followed by a narrative with a visual layout that "should help with this second function in particular."

3. Speaking at a press conference, UK Home Secretary/Council Chair Charles Clarke presented the

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new strategy as "a major step forward for the EU," though admitting that the real test will come with implementation. He said the upcoming Austrian and Finnish presidencies were "absolutely committed to carry the work forward." Clarke said the strategy covers four strands of work:

- PREVENTION: "To prevent people turning to terrorism by tackling the factors or root causes which can lead to radicalization and recruitment, in Europe and internationally" (see below);
- PROTECTION: "To protect citizens and infrastructure and reduce our vulnerability to attack, including through improved security of borders, transport and critical infrastructure";
- PURSUIT: "To pursue and investigate terrorists across borders and globally; to impede planning, travel, and communications; to disrupt support networks; to cut off funding and access to attack materials, and bring terrorists to justice"; and
- RESPONSE: "To prepare ourselves to manage and minimize the consequences of a terrorist attack, by improving capabilities to deal with the aftermath, the coordination of the response, and the needs of victims."

COMBATING RADICALIZATION AND RECRUITMENT

4. As part of the broader CT Strategy and Action Plan, the Council agreed for the first time on an "EU Strategy for Combating Radicalization and

Recruitment to Terrorism." This paper builds on a March 2004 communication by the Commission and further work conducted under four successive presidencies. Based on the recognition that addressing this challenge is "beyond the power of the governments alone" and that "Al-Qauida and those inspired by them will only be defeated with the engagement of the public, and especially Muslims, in Europe and beyond," the strategy sets out to combat radicalization and recruitment under key headings as follows:

- Disrupting the activities of the networks and individuals who draw people into terrorism;
- Ensuring that voices of mainstream opinion prevail over those of extremism: addressing "motivational" factors that can lead individuals to become radicalized;
- Promoting yet more vigorously security, justice, democracy and opportunity for all: addressing "structural" factors that create the socio-economic environment in which the radical message becomes appealing both inside and outside the EU;
- Increasing the understanding of the phenomenon and developing the response appropriately.

15. The strategy asserts that throughout its implementation, governments will "ensure respect for fundamental rights." Speaking to the press, Commission Vice-President Frattini, laid great stress, as in many of his public interventions over the past few weeks, on his "balanced approach" between "enhancing the security of the Union" and "preserving the high standards of protection of fundamental human rights in line with the European Convention on Human Rights and the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights."

16. Speaking to reporters, CT Coordinator Gijs de Vries said: "We are facing a dual threat: a threat from people who come to Europe from the outside, and a threat from people who live in Europe, some of them first-generation migrants and some of them born here." To illustrate his point that EU coordination was essential, the CT Coordinator referred to the police raids conducted in Belgium November 30 against terror suspects believed to have links to a network that sent volunteers to Iraq. De Vries also rebutted suggestions of any linkage between poverty and terrorism: "There are many people inside Europe and elsewhere living in difficult conditions and they do not strike into terrorism."

17. Swedish Justice Minister Tomas Bodstrom sought to appease concerns that the strategy might be perceived as pointing fingers at Muslims. Bodstrom told reporters that as long as responsible authorities kept repeating that the measures target criminals, and nobody else, it should be obvious that the EU does not wish to accuse any particular religious group. Bodstrom also said: "We should not have to apologize for combating terrorism, and the methods we use we have to be able to defend openly." Asked by his domestic press whether Spanish police would survey mosques to make sure radical interpreters of Islam do not recruit attendants, Spanish Interior Minister Jose Antonio Alonso said "the controlling of terrorism has to be done where it is created, be it in a phone shop or a mosque." Alonso also called for more efforts on the aftermath of terrorist attacks, suggesting the creation of a special European agency for assisting the victims of terrorism. "We need to hand out concrete help, not only nice political statements," he said.

IMPLEMENTATION OF EU CT ACTION PLAN

18. The Council noted the six-month report from Coordinator de Vries on the implementation of the EC CT Action Plan, which will also be forwarded to the European Council. The third report of this kind includes an update on key dossiers highlighted at the special July 13 JHA Council following the London attacks (USEU BRUSSELS 2688). "A number of instruments which have been adopted have still to be implemented by all member states, in some cases preventing their entry into force in the Union," the report said. An annex to the report shows the state of implementation by member states of the agreed EU legislation (scoreboard).

INFORMATION EXCHANGES BETWEEN LAW ENFORCEMENT
AUTHORITIES

19. In a Mixed Committee with Schengen partners Norway, Iceland and Switzerland, ministers agreed on a "general approach" on the Framework Decision on simplifying the exchange of information and intelligence between law enforcement authorities, in particular as regards serious offences including terrorist acts. The Framework Decision will ensure that certain information vital for law enforcement authorities is exchanged in a rapid manner within the EU. Member states should respond within at most 8 hours to urgent requests for information and intelligence regarding offences referred to in the 2002 EU Framework Decision on the European arrest warrant, including terrorist acts.

OTHER REPORTS

10. Among other decisions taken without discussion December 1, the Council:

- Endorsed a report by the Presidency and CT Coordinator de Vries on EU crisis coordination arrangements to assist Member States during cross-border emergencies;
- Approved a report on the evaluation of national arrangements improving CT machinery and capability;
- Noted the CT Coordinator's regular report on the fight against terrorist financing;
- Noted a report on technical modalities to implement the principle of availability of information on six areas: DNA, fingerprints, ballistics, vehicle registration, telephone numbers and identification of persons;
- Noted the second annual report of the European network for the protection of public figures;
- Adopted conclusions on the protection of critical infrastructure;
- Adopted conclusions on a Code of Conduct to prevent the misuse of the non-profit/charitable sector by terrorists;
- Noted the 2005 EU report on organized crime;
- Noted a report containing recommendations addressed to France, Ireland, Luxembourg, Netherlands, UK and Europol on exchange of information and intelligence relating to the fight against organized crime.

11. Further information on these items and reports is available from the JHA Council conclusions (<http://ue.eu.int/press>) and EU Council register of documents, using references from these conclusions (<http://register.consilium.eu.int/servlet>).

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